

NIFA in the News – Week of September 17, 2012

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In the News

Group gets \$562K grant to help new farmers (Yakima Herald 9/14). A local nonprofit group that helps low-income residents start their own businesses has received a federal grant to help Latino farmers get started in agriculture. Rural Community Development Resources will receive \$562,500 in a three-year grant to offer programs in obtaining financing, financial management and other services to Latino farmers in the Yakima Valley and Wenatchee area. The Yakima-based organization is one of two recipients in Washington state under a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant program to support young, beginning and socially disadvantaged producers. The other recipient is Washington State University with a grant of more than \$675,000. They are among 40 recipients in 24 states that will share in \$18 million in grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Next-generation Robotics Research Gets Funding (Info Zine 9/16). The National Science Foundation (NSF), in partnership with NASA, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), awarded just under \$50 million to grantees around the country for the development and use of robots that cooperatively work with people and enhance individual human capabilities, performance and safety. These mark the first round of awards of the Obama Administration's National Robotics Initiative (NRI) launched with NSF as the lead federal agency just over a year ago as part of the president's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership Initiative. NSF itself is announcing 31 of the awards totaling nearly \$30 million. [Link](#)

New varieties highlight LSU AgCenter sweet potato field day (Delta Farm Press 9/17). Two new sweet potato varieties -- Orleans and 07-146 -- were featured at the LSU AgCenter Sweet Potato Research Station field day. . . . The Specialty Crop Research Initiative, a grant-funded program of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, includes producers in evaluating new production practices. [Link](#)

3 open minutes with Sonny Ramaswamy (Progressive Dairy 9/17). In March,

President Obama appointed Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy as director of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Ramaswamy, an entomologist, grew up in India at a time when food was scarce. However, he also experienced firsthand how research – especially agricultural research – can transform a country for the better. Throughout his career, Ramaswamy served in administrative and educational and research capacities at multiple land-grant universities across the country. Progressive Dairyman Editor Dario Martinez followed up with Ramaswamy to discuss NIFA's current research endeavors, including those connected to the dairy industry. [Link](#)

Racer Academy of Agriculture Enhanced by NIFA grant (SrufKY News 9/18).

The Murray State University Hutson School of Agriculture is expanding a secondary partnership program that will help address the demand for increased rigor and emphasis on college and career readiness. The program will form a link between secondary agricultural education and postsecondary education. The United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) provides a Capacity Building Grant for the Non Land Grant College of Agriculture Program. The program encourages awardees to carry out educational, research and outreach activities that address priority concerns of national, regional, state and local interest. NIFA awarded \$136,138 to expand the Racer Academy of Agriculture by developing new courses and increasing the number of secondary partners. The award will also be used to improve instructional procedure and gather data for evaluation, analysis and refinement. [Link](#)

‘Armed to Farm’ gives veterans tools to farm (Cattle Network 9/19). For many military veterans and their families, the transition from the military to civilian life is a complex undertaking; however, reports and personal accounts indicate that many military veterans have discovered that farming offers a place for employment, training and healing. The problem is there are few educational programs tailored to meet the particular needs and abilities of returning veterans. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) makes it possible to fill that gap in training. At the University of Arkansas, Dr. Dan Donoghue used BFRDP funds to develop internships, workshops and online courses that focus on the needs of veterans interested in pursuing farming after their service to our country. [Link](#)

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